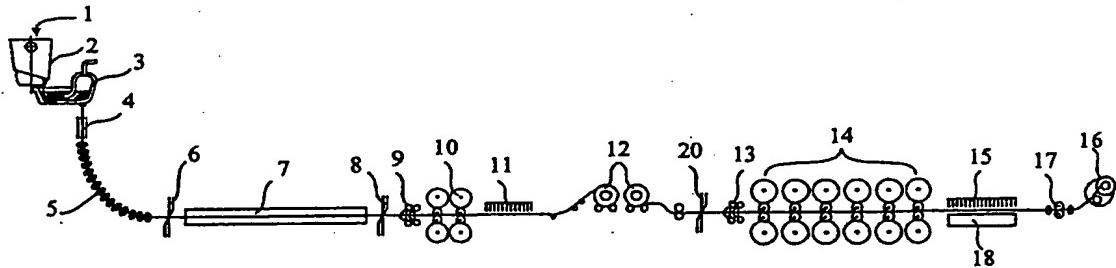




INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ :	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 98/26882
B21B 1/46, 1/26, C21D 8/02, 8/04		(43) International Publication Date: 25 June 1998 (25.06.98)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/NL97/00718		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
(22) International Filing Date: 19 December 1997 (19.12.97)		
(30) Priority Data: 1004829 19 December 1996 (19.12.96) NL		
(71) Applicant (<i>for all designated States except US</i>): HOOGOVENS STAAL B.V. [NL/NL]; P.O. Box 10000, NL-1970 CA IJmuiden (NL).		
(72) Inventors; and		Published
(75) Inventors/Applicants (<i>for US only</i>): CORNELISSEN, Marcus, Cornelis, Maria [NL/NL]; Willem Alexandersingel 2, NL-1902 BZ Castricum (NL). GROOT, Aldricus, Maria [NL/NL]; Middenweg 496, NL-1704 BM Heerhugowaard (NL). DEN HARTOG, Huibert, Willem [NL/NL]; Troelstraalaan 2, NL-2211 AC Noordwijkerhout (NL).		<i>With international search report. In English translation (filed in Dutch).</i>
(74) Agent: HANSEN, Willem, Joseph, Maria; Hoogovens Corporate Services B.V., P.O. Box 10000, NL-1970 CA IJmuiden (NL).		

(54) Title: PROCESS AND DEVICE FOR PRODUCING A STEEL STRIP OR SHEET



(57) Abstract

Process for producing a steel strip or sheet, in which liquid steel is cast in a continuous-casting machine to form a thin plate and, while making use of the casting heat, is fed through a furnace device, is roughed in a roughing stand to a pass-over thickness and is rerolled in a finishing rolling stand to form a steel strip or sheet of the desired final thickness, in which (a) to produce a ferritically rolled steel strip, the strip, the plate or a part thereof is fed without interruption at least from the furnace device, at speeds which essentially correspond to the speed of entry into the roughing stand and the following reductions in thickness, from the roughing stand to a processing device which is disposed downstream of the finishing rolling stand, the strip coming out of the roughing stand being cooled to a temperature at which the steel has an essentially ferritic structure; (b) to produce an austenitically rolled steel strip, the strip coming out of the roughing roll is brought to or held at a temperature in the austenitic range, and in the finishing rolling stand it is rolled to the final thickness essentially in the austenitic field and is then cooled, after this rolling, to the ferritic field.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AL	Albania	ES	Spain	LS	Lesotho	SI	Slovenia
AM	Armenia	FI	Finland	LT	Lithuania	SK	Slovakia
AT	Austria	FR	France	LU	Luxembourg	SN	Senegal
AU	Australia	GA	Gabon	LV	Larvia	SZ	Swaziland
AZ	Azerbaijan	GB	United Kingdom	MC	Monaco	TD	Chad
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	GE	Georgia	MD	Republic of Moldova	TG	Togo
BB	Barbados	GH	Ghana	MG	Madagascar	TJ	Tajikistan
BE	Belgium	GN	Guinea	MK	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	TM	Turkmenistan
BF	Burkina Faso	GR	Greece	ML	Mali	TR	Turkey
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	MN	Mongolia	TT	Trinidad and Tobago
BJ	Benin	IE	Ireland	MR	Mauritania	UA	Ukraine
BR	Brazil	IL	Israel	MW	Malawi	UG	Uganda
BY	Belarus	IS	Iceland	MX	Mexico	US	United States of America
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	NE	Niger	UZ	Uzbekistan
CF	Central African Republic	JP	Japan	NL	Netherlands	VN	Viet Nam
CG	Congo	KE	Kenya	NO	Norway	YU	Yugoslavia
CH	Switzerland	KG	Kyrgyzstan	NZ	New Zealand	ZW	Zimbabwe
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	PL	Poland		
CM	Cameroon	KR	Republic of Korea	PT	Portugal		
CN	China	KZ	Kazakhstan	RO	Romania		
CU	Cuba	LC	Saint Lucia	RU	Russian Federation		
CZ	Czech Republic	LI	Liechtenstein	SD	Sudan		
DE	Germany	LK	Sri Lanka	SE	Sweden		
DK	Denmark	LR	Liberia	SG	Singapore		
EE	Estonia						

PROCESS AND DEVICE FOR PRODUCING A STEEL STRIP OR SHEET

The invention relates to a process for
5 producing a steel strip or sheet, in which liquid steel
is cast in a continuous-casting machine to form a thin
plate and, while making use of the casting heat, is fed
through a furnace device, is roughed in a roughing
stand to a pass-over thickness and is rerolled in a
10 finishing rolling stand to form a steel strip or sheet
of the desired final thickness, and to a device which
is suitable for use in such a process.

Where the following text refers to a steel
strip, this is also to be understood as including a
15 steel sheet. A thin plate is understood to mean a plate
whose thickness is less than 150 mm, preferably less
than 100 mm.

A process of this kind is known from European
Patent Application 0 666 122.

20 This Patent Application describes a process in
which a continuously cast thin steel plate, after being
homogenized in a tunnel furnace device, is rolled in a
number of hot-rolling steps, i.e. in the austenitic
field, to form a strip having a thickness of less than
25 2 mm.

In order to achieve such a final thickness
using rolling devices and rolling trains which can be
realized in practise, it is proposed to reheat the
steel strip, preferably by means of an induction
30 furnace, at least after the first rolling mill stand.

A separating device is positioned between the
continuous-casting machine and the tunnel furnace
device, which device is used to cut the continuously
cast thin plate into pieces of approximately equal
35 length, which pieces are homogenized in the tunnel
furnace device at a temperature of approx. 1050°C to
approx. 1150°C. After leaving the tunnel furnace
device, the pieces may if desired be cut again into
half-plates which have a weight which corresponds to

the coil weight of the wound coil to which the steel strip is wound downstream of the rolling device.

The object of the invention is to provide a process of the known type which offers more options and with which, moreover, steel strip or sheet can be produced in a more efficient way. To this end, the process according to the invention is characterized in that

- a. to produce a ferritically rolled steel strip, the strip, the plate or a part thereof is fed without interruption at least from the furnace device, at speeds which essentially correspond to the speed of entry into the roughing stand and the following reductions in thickness, from the roughing stand to a processing device which is disposed downstream of the finishing rolling stand, the strip coming out of the roughing stand being cooled to a temperature at which the steel has an essentially ferritic structure;
- b. to produce an austenitically rolled steel strip, the strip coming out of the roughing roll is brought to or held at a temperature in the austenitic range, and in the finishing rolling stand it is rolled to the final thickness essentially in the austenitic field and is then cooled, after this rolling, to the ferritic field.

In this context, strip is understood to mean a plate of reduced thickness.

In the conventional method for producing ferritic, or cold-rolled, steel strip, the starting point is a hot-rolled roll of steel, as is also produced using the known method from EP 0,666,112. A hot-rolled roll of steel of this kind usually has a weight of between 16 and 30 tonnes. In this case, the problem arises that it is very difficult, with large width/thickness ratios of the steel strip obtained, to control the dimensions of the strip, i.e. the thickness profile over the width of the strip and over the length of the strip. Owing to the discontinuity in the stream

of material, the top and tail of the hot-rolled strip behave differently from the central part in the rolling device. Controlling the dimensions represents a problem above all during entry and exit of the hot-rolled strip 5 into and out of the finishing rolling stand for ferritic or cold rolling. In practice, advanced forwards and self-adapting control systems and numerical models have been used in an attempt to keep the top and tail, which have incorrect dimensions, as 10 short as possible. Nevertheless, every roll has a top and tail which is to be rejected and may amount to up to a few tens of metres in length.

In the installations currently used, a width/thickness ratio of about 1200 - 1400 is regarded 15 as the maximum which can be achieved in practice: a greater width/thickness ratio leads to an excessively long top and tail before reaching a stable situation, and hence to excessive levels of scrap.

On the other hand, with a view to efficiency of 20 materials when working a hot-rolled or cold-rolled steel strip, there is a need for a greater width with an identical or reduced thickness. Width/thickness ratios of 2000 or more are desired in the market, but cannot be achieved in practice with the known process, 25 for the reasons described above.

The process according to the invention makes it possible to rough the steel strip, at any rate from the furnace device, in an uninterrupted or continuous process in the austenitic field, to cool it to the 30 ferritic field and to roll it in the ferritic field to give the final thickness.

A much simpler feedback control has proven sufficient for controlling the dimensions of the strip.

The invention also makes use of the insight 35 that it is possible to employ the process with which, according to the prior art, only hot-rolled steel strip is produced, in such a manner, while making use of essentially the same means, that this process can also be used to obtain, in addition to an austenitically

rolled steel strip, a ferritically rolled steel strip as well, having the properties of a cold-rolled steel strip.

This opens up the possibility of using a device
5 which is known per se to produce a wider range of steel strips, and more particularly to produce steel strips which have a considerably higher added value on the market. In addition, the process yields a particular advantage when rolling a ferritic strip according to
10 step a, as will be explained in the following text.

The invention also makes it possible to achieve a number of other important advantages, as will be described in the following text.

When carrying out the process according to the
15 invention, it is preferred for the roughing to take place in the austenitic field, as soon as possible downstream of the furnace device in which the plate is homogenized at temperature. Furthermore, it is preferred to select a high rolling speed and reduction.
20 In order to obtain constant properties for the steel, it is necessary to prevent the plate, or at least an excessive part thereof, from passing into the two-phase field in which the austenitic and ferritic structures exist next to one another. After leaving the furnace
25 device, the homogenized austenitic plate cools most rapidly at the side edges. It has been found that cooling takes place primarily over an edge part of the plate which has a width which is comparable to the current thickness of the plate or strip. By rolling the
30 strip shortly after it leaves the furnace, and preferably with a considerable reduction, the extent of the cooled edge part is limited. It is then possible to produce a strip of the correct strip shape and with constant, predictable properties over virtually the
35 entire width.

The virtually homogeneous temperature distribution over the width, together with the thickness of the plate, provides the additional advantage of a broader working range within which the

invention can be employed. Since it is undesirable to carry out rolling in the two-phase field, the working range with regard to the temperature is limited on the underside by the temperature of that part of the plate which first passes into the two-phase field, i.e. the edge region. In the conventional process, the temperatures of the central part is then still far above the transition temperature at which austenite begins to change into ferrite. In order nevertheless to be able to exploit the higher temperature of the central part, it is proposed in the prior art to reheat the edges. Using the invention, this measure is not necessary, or at least is necessary to a considerably reduced extent, and the result is that the austenitic rolling process can be continued until virtually the entire plate, in particular in the width direction, is at a temperature close to the transition temperature.

The more uniform temperature distribution prevents the situation where a relatively small part of the plate has already passed into the two-phase field, thus making further rolling undesirable, while a large part is still well in the austenitic field and thus could still be rolled. It should also be considered here that on cooling from the austenitic field over a relatively small temperature span of the temperature range within which transformation occurs, a large proportion of the material is transformed. This means that even a small fall below the transition temperature results in a large part of the steel being transformed. For this reason, in practice there is considerable anxiety about falling below the highest temperature of this temperature range.

More detailed embodiments of the invention and a device for carrying out the invention, as well as exemplary embodiments, are described in Patent Application NL-1003293, which is hereby deemed to be incorporated in its entirety in this patent.

The invention is particularly suitable for use in the production of deep-drawing steel. In order to be

suitable as a deep-drawing steel, a steel grade has to satisfy a number of requirements, of which a few important ones are discussed below.

To obtain a closed so-called two-part can, the 5 first part of which comprises the base and the body and the second part of which is the lid, the basis for the first part is a planar blank made of deep-drawing steel, which is first deep-drawn to form a cup having a diameter of, for example, 90 mm and a height of, for 10 example, 30 mm, the walls of which cup are then drawn to form the can having a diameter of, for example, 66 mm and a height of, for example, 115 mm. Indicative values for the thickness of the steel material in the various production phases are: initial thickness of the 15 blank 0.26 mm, base thickness and wall thickness of the cup 0.26 mm, base thickness of the can 0.26 mm, wall thickness of the can half-way up 0.09 mm, thickness of the top edge of the can 0.15 mm.

Deep-drawing steel has to be extremely ductile 20 and remain so over the course of time, i.e. it must not age. Ageing leads to high deformation forces, crack formation during the deformation and surface defects owing to flow lines. One way of counteracting the ageing is the so-called overageing by precipitation of 25 carbon.

The desire to save material by being able to make ever lighter cans also has an effect on the requirement of high ductility in order, starting from a given initial thickness of the blank, to be able to 30 achieve a minimum possible final thickness of the can wall and also of the top edge of the can. The top edge of the can places particular demands on the deep-drawing steel. After forming the can by drawing the walls, the diameter of the top edge is reduced, by the 35 process known as necking, in order to be able to use a smaller lid, thus saving on lid material. After the necking, a flange is provided along the top of the top edge in order to be able to attach the lid. The necking and the provision of the flange, in particular, are

processes which place high demands on the additional ductility of the deep-drawing steel, which had previously already been deformed during the fabrication of the body.

5 In addition to the ductility, the purity of the steel is important. Purity is in this case understood to mean the extent to which inclusions, mostly oxidic or gaseous inclusions, are absent. Inclusions of this kind are formed when making steel in an oxygen
10 steel-making plant and from the casting powder which is used in the continuous casting of the steel plate which forms the starting material for the deep-drawing steel. During necking or forming of the flange, an inclusion may lead to a crack, which itself is in turn the cause
15 of a subsequent leak in the can which has been filled with its contents and then closed. During storage and transportation, contents leaking out of the can may, as a result of contamination in particular, cause damage to other cans and goods around it which amounts to many
20 times the value of just the leaking can with its contents. As the thickness of the edge of the can decreases, the risk of a crack resulting from an inclusion increases. Therefore, deep-drawing steel should be free of inclusions. Insofar as inclusions are
25 inevitable in the current method of steel making, their dimensions are to be kept as small as possible, and they should only occur in very small numbers.

Yet a further requirement relates to the level of anisotropy of the deep-drawing steel. When producing
30 a deep-drawn/wall-drawn or wall-thinned two-part can, the top edge of the can does not run in a planar surface, but rather has a wave pattern around the circumference of the can. In specialist circles, the wave crests are referred to as ears. The tendency to
35 earing is a result of anisotropy in the deep-drawing steel. The ears have to be cut down to the level of the lowest trough, in order to obtain a top edge which runs in a flat surface and can be deformed into a flange, and this process leads to a loss of material. The level

of earing is dependent on the total cold-rolling reduction and on the carbon concentration.

It is usual, for considerations of process engineering, to start from a hot-rolled sheet or strip having a thickness of 1.8 mm or more. With a reduction of about 85%, this leads to a final thickness of approx. 0.27 mm. In view of the desire to minimize the consumption of material for each can, a lower final thickness, preferably of lower than 0.21 mm, is desired. Guideline values of approx. 0.17 mm are already being mentioned. At a given starting thickness of approx. 1.8 mm, this therefore requires a reduction of more than 90%. With the usual carbon concentrations, this leads to severe earing, and thus, as a result of these ears being cut off, to additional loss of material, thus negating part of the benefit gained from a lower thickness. A solution has been sought in the use of extra-low or ultra-low carbon steel (ULC steel). Steel of this kind, which has generally accepted carbon concentrations of below 0.01%, down to values of 0.001% or lower, is made by blowing more oxygen into the steel melt in an oxygen steel-making plant, so that more carbon is burnt. If desired, this may be followed by a vacuum pan treatment, in order to reduce the carbon concentration further. As a result of introducing more oxygen into the steel melt, this also results in undesirable metal oxides in the steel melt, which remain as inclusions in the cast steel plate, and later in the cold-rolled strip. The effect of inclusions is magnified by the lower final thickness of the cold-rolled steel. As has been discussed, inclusions are damaging, since they can lead to crack formation. As a result of the lower final thickness, this damaging effect applies a fortiori to ULC steel. The result is that the yield of ULC steel grades for packaging purposes is low, owing to the high level of scrap.

Another object of the invention is to provide a process for producing a deep-drawing steel from steel grades of the low-carbon steel class, which is usually

understood to mean a carbon content of between 0.1% and 0.01%, making it possible to achieve a low final thickness with a high yield of the material and also allowing other advantages to be achieved. According to 5 the invention, this method is characterized in that the steel strip is a low-carbon steel having a carbon content of between 0.1% and 0.01% and is cooled, at a pass-over thickness of less than 1.8 mm, from the austenitic field to the ferritic field, and the total 10 reduction by rolling in the ferritic field is less than 90%. The level of anisotropy is dependent on the carbon concentration and the total rolling reduction to which the deep-drawing steel has been subjected in the ferritic field.

15 The invention is based on the further insight that the total reduction in the ferritic field after transition from the austenitic field is important for the earing, and that earing can be prevented or limited, when cold-rolling in the ferritic field, by 20 keeping the reduction within a defined limit, for a given carbon content, by entering the ferritic field with a sufficiently thin strip.

A preferred embodiment of the process according 25 to the invention is characterized in that the total reduction brought about by rolling in the ferritic field is less than 87%. The level of rolling reduction at which minimum anisotropy occurs is dependent on the carbon concentration and increases as the carbon concentration falls. For low-carbon steel, the cold- 30 rolling reduction which produces minimum anisotropy and hence minimum earing, lies in the range of less than 87%, or more preferably less than 85%. In conjunction with good deformation properties, it is preferred for the total reduction to be more than 75%, and more 35 preferably more than 80%.

The reduction to be carried out in the ferritic field can be kept low, at a low end thickness, in another embodiment of the invention which is

characterized in that the pass-over thickness is less than 1.5 mm.

The process indicated provides a deep-drawing steel which can be produced in the known manner using a generally known device and which makes it possible to produce thinner deep-drawing steel than was hitherto possible. Known techniques can be used for rolling and further processing in the ferritic field.

The invention will now be explained in more detail with reference to a non-limiting embodiment in accordance with the drawing, in which:

Fig. 1 shows a diagrammatic side view of a device according to the invention;

Fig. 2 shows a graph illustrating the temperature curve in the steel as a function of the position in the device;

Fig. 3 shows a graph illustrating the thickness profile of the steel as a function of the position in the device.

In Fig. 1, reference numeral 1 indicates a continuous-casting machine for casting thin plates. In this introductory description, a continuous-casting machine is understood to be suitable for casting thin steel plates having a thickness of less than 150 mm, preferably less than 100 mm. Reference numeral 2 indicates a casting ladle, from which the liquid steel to be cast is fed into a transfer ladle 3, which in this design takes the form of a vacuum transfer ladle. Beneath the transfer ladle 3, there is a casting mould 4, into which the liquid steel is poured, where it solidifies at least partially. If desired, the casting mould 4 may be equipped with an electromagnetic brake. The vacuum transfer ladle and the electromagnetic brake are not necessary, and may also each be used on their own, providing the possibility of achieving a higher casting rate and better internal quality of the cast steel. The conventional continuous-casting machine has a casting rate of approximately 6 m/min; extra measures, such as a vacuum transfer ladle and/or an

electromagnetic brake, provide the prospect of casting rates of 8 m/min or more. The solidified thin plate is introduced into a tunnel furnace 7 having a length of, for example, 200 m. As soon as the cast plate has 5 reached the end of the furnace 7, the shearing mechanism 6 is used to cut the plate into plate parts. Each plate part represents a quantity of steel corresponding to five to six conventional coils. There is room in the furnace to store a number of plate parts 10 of this kind, for example to store three such plate parts. As a result, those parts of the installation which lie downstream of the furnace can continue to operate while the casting ladle in the continuous-casting machine has to be exchanged and it is necessary 15 to start casting a new plate. Also, storage in the furnace increases the residence time of the plate parts therein, thus also ensuring better temperature homogenization of the plate parts. The speed at which the plate enters the furnace corresponds to the casting 20 rate, and is therefore about 0.1 m/sec. Downstream of furnace 7, there is an oxide-removal device 9, which in this case is in the form of high-pressure water jets, in order to blast the oxide which has formed on the surface of the plate off the surface. The speed at 25 which the plate passes through the oxide-removal installation and enters the furnace device 10 is approximately 0.15 m/sec. The rolling device 10, which performs the function of the roughing device, comprises two four-high stands. If desired, a shearing mechanism 30 8 may be incorporated for emergencies.

It can be seen from Fig. 2 that the temperature of the steel plate, which is at a level of approximately 1450°C on leaving the transfer ladle, falls, over the roller conveyor, to a level of 35 approximately 1150°C, and is homogenized at this temperature in the furnace device. As a result of the intensive spraying with water in the oxide-removal device 9, the temperature of the plate falls from approximately 1150°C to approximately 1050°C, both for

the austenitic process and for the ferritic process, respectively denoted a and f. In the two rolling stands of the roughing device 10, the temperature of the plate falls approximately a further 50°C on each roll path, so that the plate, which originally had a thickness of approximately 70 mm, has been formed in two steps, with an interim thickness of 42 mm, into a steel strip with a thickness of approximately 16.8 mm at a temperature of approximately 950°C. The thickness profile as a function of the location is shown in Fig. 3. The numbers indicate the thickness in mm. A cooling device 11 and a set of coil boxes 12 and, if desired, an additional furnace device (not shown) are incorporated downstream of the roughing device 10. When producing an austenitically rolled strip, the strip coming out of the rolling device 10 is, if appropriate, stored temporarily and is homogenized in the coil boxes 12, and if an extra temperature increase is required it is heated in the heating device (not shown) which is positioned downstream of the coil box. It will be obvious to the person skilled in the art that cooling device 11, coil boxes 12 and the furnace device (not shown) may be in different positions with respect to one another from those outlined above. As a result of the reduction in thickness, the rolled strip enters the coil boxes at a speed of approximately 0.6 m/sec. A second oxide-removal installation 13 is positioned downstream of the cooling device 11, coil boxes 12 or furnace device (not shown), in order again to remove an oxide skin which may have formed on the surface of the rolled strip. If desired, another shearing device may also be incorporated, in order to cut off the top and tail from a strip. The strip is then introduced into a rolling train, which may take the form of six series-connected four-high rolling stands. If an austenitic strip is being produced, it is possible to reach the desired final thickness of, for example, 1.0 mm by using only five rolling stands. The thickness reached in this operation for each rolling stand is indicated

in the top row of figures in Fig. 3 for the case of a plate thickness of 70 mm. After leaving the rolling train 14, the strip, which is then at a final temperature of approximately 900°C with a thickness of 5 1.0 mm, is cooled intensively by means of a cooling device 15 and is wound onto a coiler 16. The speed at which it enters the coiler is approximately 13 m/sec. If a ferritically rolled steel strip is to be produced, the steel strip leaving the roughing device 10 is 10 cooled intensively by means of cooling device 11. The strip then bypasses coil boxes 12 and, if desired, the furnace device (not shown), and oxide is then removed in oxide-removal installation 13. The strip, which has by now reached the ferritic field, is at a temperature 15 of approximately 750°C. As stated above, some of the material may still be austenitic, but depending on the carbon content and the desired final quality, this is acceptable. In order to achieve the desired final thickness for the ferritic strip of approximately 0.7 20 to 0.8 mm, all six stands of the rolling train 14 are used. As in the situation where an austenitic strip was rolled, when rolling a ferritic strip there is an essentially identical reduction for each rolling stand, with the exception of the reduction by the final 25 rolling stand. This is illustrated in the temperature curve shown in Fig. 2 and the thickness profile shown by the bottom series of numbers in Fig. 3 for the ferritic rolling of the steel strip, as a function of the position. The temperature curve shows that the 30 strip has an exit temperature which is well above the recrystallization temperature. Therefore, to prevent the formation of oxides, it may be desirable to cool the strip, with the aid of cooling device 15, to the desired coiling temperature, in which case 35 recrystallization may still occur. If the exit temperature from rolling train 14 is too low, a furnace device 18, which is disposed downstream of the rolling train, may be used to bring the ferritically rolled strip up to a desired coiling temperature. Cooling

device 15 and furnace device 18 may be placed in parallel or in series with one another. It is also possible to replace one device with the other device, depending on whether ferritic or austenitic strip is being produced. As has been mentioned, if a ferritic strip is being produced, rolling is carried out continuously. This means that the strip emerging from the rolling device 14 and optionally cooling device 15 or furnace device 18 has a greater length than that which is usual for forming a single coil, and that plate part of a complete furnace length, or longer, is rolled continuously. In order to cut the strip to the desired length, corresponding to the usual dimensions of a coil, there is a shearing mechanism 17. By suitably selecting the various components of the device and the process steps which they are used to carry out, such as homogenization, rolling, cooling and temporary storage, it has proven possible to operate this device with a single continuous-casting machine, whereas the prior art uses two continuous-casting machines in order for the limited casting rate to be matched to the much higher rolling rates which are generally used. If desired, an additional so-called closed-coiler may be incorporated directly downstream of the rolling train 14, in order to assist with control of the running and temperature of the strip. The device is suitable for strips having a width which lies in the range between 1000 and 1500 mm, with a thickness of an austenitically rolled strip of approximately 1.0 mm and a thickness of a ferritically rolled strip of approximately 0.7 to 0.8 mm. The homogenization time in the furnace device 7 is about 10 minutes for storage of three plates of the same length as the furnace. The coil box is suitable for storing two complete strips in austenitic rolling.

The method and device according to the invention are particularly suitable for making thin austenitic strip, for example having a final thickness of less than 1.2 mm. A strip of this kind is particularly suitable, with regard to earing as a

- 15 -

result of anisotropy, for further ferritic reduction for use as packaging steel in, for example, the drinks can industry.

CLAIMS

1. Process for producing a steel strip or sheet, in which liquid steel is cast in a continuous-casting machine to form a thin plate and, while making use of the casting heat, is fed through a furnace device, is roughed in a roughing stand to a pass-over thickness and is rerolled in a finishing rolling stand to form a steel strip or sheet of the desired final thickness, characterized in that
 - a. to produce a ferritically rolled steel strip, the strip, the plate or a part thereof is fed without interruption at least from the furnace device, at speeds which essentially correspond to the speed of entry into the roughing stand and the following reductions in thickness, from the roughing stand to a processing device which is disposed downstream of the finishing rolling stand, the strip coming out of the roughing stand being cooled to a temperature at which the steel has an essentially ferritic structure;
 - b. to produce an austenitically rolled steel strip, the strip coming out of the roughing roll is brought to or held at a temperature in the austenitic range, and in the finishing rolling stand it is rolled to the final thickness essentially in the austenitic field and is then cooled, after this rolling, to the ferritic field.
2. Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that the final thickness of the austenitically rolled strip is less than 1.8 mm, preferably less than 1.5 mm, and more preferably less than 1.2 mm, and the strip or sheet is cold-rolled to a ferritic final thickness in the ferritic field with a total reduction of less than 90%, in which case the steel strip is produced from a low or ultra-low carbon steel and is suitable as deep-drawing steel.
3. Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the total reduction

resulting from rolling in the ferritic field is less than 87%.

4. Process according to one of Claims 2 or 3, characterized in that the ferritic final thickness is
5 reached at least partly in step a.

5. Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the pass-over thickness is less than 20 mm.

10 6. Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the width/thickness ratio of the steel strip or sheet is greater than 1500, preferably greater than 2000.

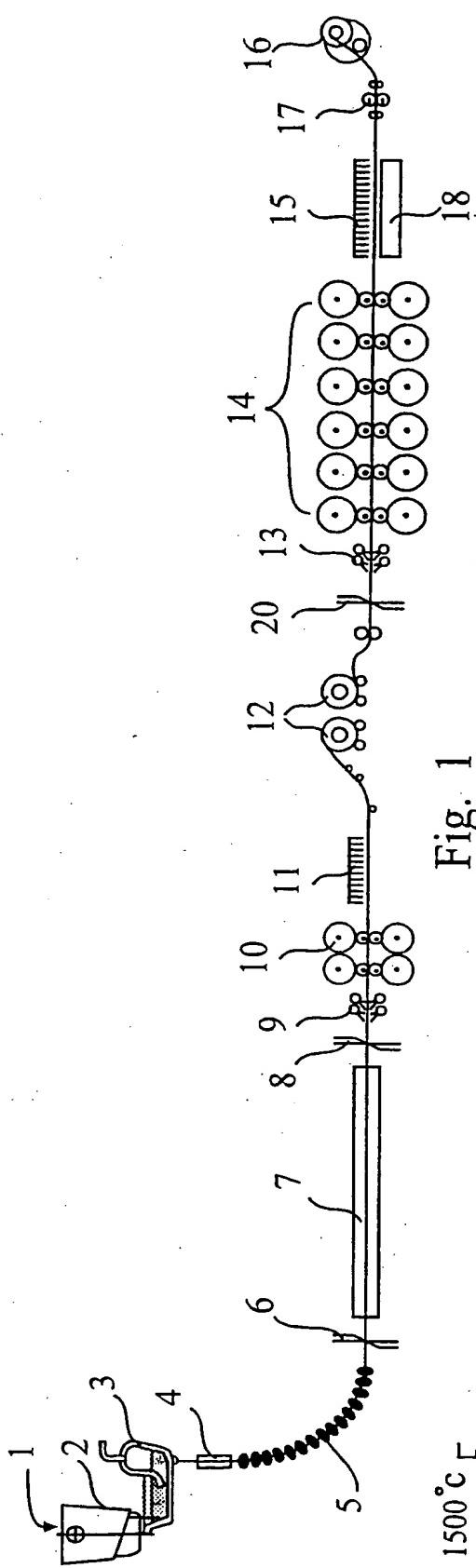


Fig. 1

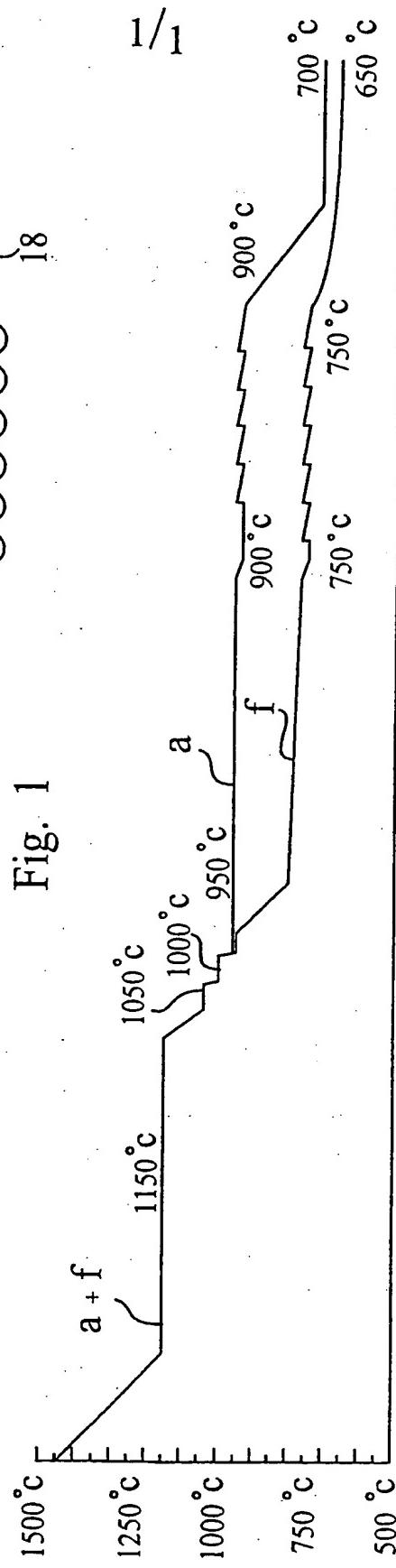


Fig. 2

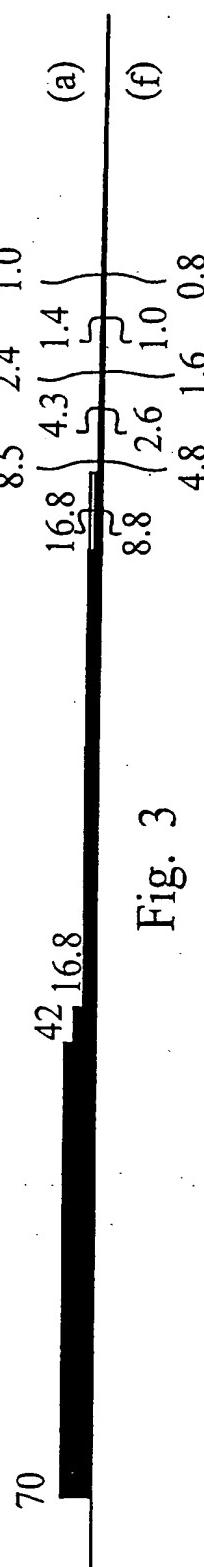


Fig. 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. tional Application No

PCT/NL 97/00718

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER	IPC 6	B21B1/46	B21B1/26	C21D8/02	C21D8/04
-------------------------------------	-------	----------	----------	----------	----------

According to International Patent Classification(IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 B21B C21D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
P, X	WO 97 46332 A (HOOGOVENS STAAL BV) 11 December 1997 cited in the application see page 24, line 5 - line 11; claims 1,21; figures	1,2,5,6
A	EP 0 771 596 A (SCHLOEMANN SIEMAG AG) 7 May 1997 see column 5, line 32 - line 48; figure	3,4
P, X	EP 0 761 326 A (SCHLOEMANN SIEMAG AG) 12 March 1997 see column 3, line 43 - line 48 see column 4, line 19 - line 44; figure 1	1
Y	DE 195 20 832 A (MANNESMANN AG) 25 April 1996	1
A	see the whole document	2-6
	-/-	

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
- "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
30 March 1998	06/04/1998

Name and mailing address of the ISA	Authorized officer
-------------------------------------	--------------------

European Patent Office, P.B. 5618 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl.
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Plastiras, D

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inte Jonal Application No
PCT/NL 97/00718

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	G. McMANUS: "Ferritic rolling of hot rolled sheet: Successful use of new technology could open doors" IRON & STEEL ENGINEER, vol. 72, no. 8, August 1995, PITTSBURGH, PA, USA, pages 53-54, XP000527905 see the whole document ---	1
A	EP 0 306 076 A (HOOGOVENS GROEP BV) 8 March 1989 see abstract; claims; figures ---	1-6
A	MESSIEN P ET AL: "LE LAMINAGE A FROID ET LE RECUIT DES BANDES A CHAUD FERRITIQUES*" CAHIERS D'INFORMATIONS TECHNIQUES DE LA REVUE DE METALLURGIE, vol. 89, no. 5, 1 May 1992, pages 447-453, XP000293321 see abstract ---	1-6
A	EP 0 226 446 A (KAWASAKI STEEL CO) 24 June 1987 see abstract; figures 13,14 see column 11, line 22 - column 12, line 11 ---	1

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/NL 97/00718

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 9746332 A	11-12-97	NL 1003293 C NL 1003293 A	10-12-97 10-12-97
EP 0771596 A	07-05-97	DE 19540978 A CA 2188525 A JP 9164404 A	07-05-97 04-05-97 24-06-97
EP 0761326 A	12-03-97	DE 19538341 A CA 2184798 A JP 9122709 A	13-03-97 07-03-97 13-05-97
DE 19520832 A	25-04-96	AU 3561395 A WO 9612573 A EP 0804300 A AU 686014 B	15-05-96 02-05-96 05-11-97 29-01-98
EP 0306076 A	08-03-89	NL 8702050 A AU 2177988 A CA 1322479 A DE 3865158 A JP 1071505 A JP 1925939 C JP 3064202 B US 4885041 A US 5009396 A	03-04-89 02-03-89 28-09-93 31-10-91 16-03-89 25-04-95 04-10-91 05-12-89 23-04-91
EP 0226446 A	24-06-87	JP 62137103 A JP 62137104 A JP 62137105 A AU 574941 B AU 6644486 A BR 8606171 A CA 1268402 A CN 1013739 B US 4793401 A JP 62230403 A	20-06-87 20-06-87 20-06-87 14-07-88 18-06-87 22-09-87 01-05-90 04-09-91 27-12-88 09-10-87